

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 00466 251120Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 DHA-02

IO-13 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /078 W

-----251134 041720 /20

O R 250900Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9516

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0466

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BC, RH

SUBJECT: GOB CLAIMS RHODESIAN ATTACK ON BOTSWANA "IMMINENT"

REF: GABORONE 463

1. RADIO BOTSWANA NEWSCAST MORNING OF FEBRUARY 25 REPORTED RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT AS SAYING THEY HAD NO RPT NO PLANS FOR A LARGE-SCALE OPERATION AGAINST BOTSWANA. ON THE CONTRARY, THE RHODESIAN SPOKESMAN WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT HOPED OHERE MIGHT NOW BE STEPS TAKEN TO RELIEVE TENSIONS ALONG THE RHODESIAN/BOTSWANA BORDER.

2. SAME BROADCAST REPORTED THAT RHODESIANS CLAIMED FORTY MORE SCHOOL CHILDREN HAD BEEN "ABDUCTED" TO BOTSWANA ON FEBRUARY 24. ADMIN SECRETARY TO PRESIDENCY TIBONE WAS

QUOTED AS SAYING HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THIS.

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3. COMMENT: CHARGE' SPOKE FEBRUARY 25 WITH UK HIGH COMMISSIONER, WHO HAD BEEN TOLD BY GOB EXACTLY SAME INFORMATION REPORTED BY EMBASSY IN REFTEL. SHE COULD ADD NOTHING MORE TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT INFORMATION AND MOTIVES PROMPTED RATHER EXTREME GOB ACTION OF YESTERDAY, BUT DID AGREE THAT GOB MAY HAVE SOUGHT BY

ITS PUBLIC AND DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO HALT ANY SUCH  
MILITARY OPERATION AS THAT CHARGED IN FEBRUARY 24 PRESS  
RELEASE. IF IN FACT A LARGE MILITARY STRIKE AGAINST  
BOTSWANA HAD BEEN CONSIDERED BY RHODESIAN (WHICH WE  
FIND HARD TO BELIEVE) THEN GOB HAS HAD AN APPARENT  
SUCCESS. WE SHALL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW IF THE THREAT  
WAS REAL, BUT DO BELIEVE GOB TOOK IT SERIOUSLY.  
OBVIOUS DISADVANTAGE OF GOB'S TACTIC IS THAT SUCH ANNOUNCE-  
MENTS CANNOT BE ISSUED VERY OFTEN AND STILL MAINTAIN  
CREDIBILITY. END SOMMENT.  
ALBERTI

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** KIDNAPPING, RADIO COMMENTS, ALLEGATIONS, GROUND COMBAT OPERATIONS, BORDER INCIDENTS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
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